

## BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Geraldo Guerrero, Jr.

Geraldo Guerrero, Jr. was born February 24, 1954 in Hilo, Hawai'i. At the age of two, he went to Honolulu to live with a grandmother. He spent his childhood and young adult years in Kalihi, O'ahu and graduated from Farrington High School in 1972.

At age twenty-one, Guerrero returned to the Big Island to live, settling in Honoka'a. In 1980, he began working for Davies Hāmākua Sugar Company (eventually called Hāmākua Sugar Company, working first in the fertilizing department and working his way up to tractor and heavy-equipment operator.

Guerrero was laid off in 1994 upon the closure of Hāmākua Sugar Company. He presently works as a security guard at the Mauna Kea Beach Hotel on the Kohala Coast. He lives in Haina with his wife, Lisa, and three children.

Tape No. 26-12-1-96

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Geraldo Guerrero, Jr. (GG)

Haina, Hawai'i

November 1, 1996

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Geraldo Guerrero, Jr. on November 1, 1996, and we're at his home in Haina, Hawai'i. The interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

Okay, let's start—if you can tell me when and where you were born?

GG: I was born in Hilo, Hawai'i at Hilo Memorial Hospital on February 24, 1954.

WN: Okay, and what were your parents doing on the Big Island?

GG: My dad [Geraldo Guerrero, Sr.], he just came out of the [U.S.] Army and met my mom [Donna Cervantes] when she was seventeen. So they got married, and guess never last too long so they got divorced. And she moved back to O'ahu and she took me with her.

WN: So your mom is originally from Honolulu, O'ahu?

GG: Yes.

WN: Well, what part?

GG: Kalihi and Damon Tract. But mostly all my life was in up Kalihi side. Closer to Farrington High School.

WN: What street?

GG: The name of the street is Kopke Street. Well, that was my grandmother's house before.

WN: Oh, oh. Your . . .

GG: We used to . . .

WN: . . . mother's mother?

GG: Yeah, we live with them. Then she moved to—she owned one pool hall in 'A'ala Street, but now don't have that pool hall anymore.

WN: What was your grandmother's name?

GG: Her name is Louisa Escobito.

WN: Escobito?

GG: Yeah.

WN: And she owned a pool hall in 'A'ala Street?

GG: Yeah.

WN: Oh, okay. And your father is from where?

GG: He's from the Big Island. He was born in Hilo, then he moved to Kukuihaele, that's going towards Waipi'o. And so he stayed there maybe for about twenty years. Then he moved to Āhualoa, that's right above Honoka'a. And then I used to live with him over there. But now he's living in Laupāhoehoe[hoehoe] right now. And he used to work for the [Hawai'i] county, you know, in Honoka'a. But he got a serious heart attack, so took an early retirement. So now he's just staying home raising chickens, selling chickens.

WN: Laupāhoehoe?

GG: Yeah.

WN: So at two years old [1956], you said, they got divorced and then you folks moved to Kalihi.

GG: Yeah, moved to Kalihi.

WN: So what was it like growing up on Kopke Street?

GG: Oh, it was all right, but kind of wild because I no more one father. And my mom didn't marry after that, she only had boyfriends, and stuff. That's not my father, so I kind of was wild. So after when I graduated from high school I used to get into trouble so I figured, aah, more better I come to the Big Island. You know, kind of slow, you no can get into trouble too much over here. So I had moved here and . . .

WN: How old were you when you moved over here?

GG: I was about twenty-one years old [1975].

WN: Twenty-one.

GG: Yeah. And then . . .

(Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

WN: Okay, so let's see, what high school did you go to?

GG: I went to Farrington [High School], graduated in 1972, barely.

(Laughter)

WN: Who actually raised you? Was it your mother or your grandmother?

GG: Was my grandma. Because my mother was young yet, too, so she was trying to get her life going, too, because she never grad[uated] from high school. But she made something out of herself. She went back to school, and she was a supervisor at Pearl Harbor [Naval Shipyard], secretary. She *wen* reach all the way to supervisor. Then she was working at Like Like Drive Inn [Restaurant], she *stay* work there, too. She still working there. She *wen* retire from Pearl Harbor.

WN: No kidding, she's still at Like Like?

GG: Yeah.

WN: Oh, next time I go I'll say hi.

GG: Yeah, long time she was there. She's one of the veterans. (WN chuckles.) But I proud of her for what she *wen* do with her life, because when I used to live with her, I see her struggling and everything. So I try not to ask too much of her, you know, things like that. Even now as I get older, too, I still—from young I still get that habit, try not to ask anything from her. 'Cause I see if she can do 'em, I can do 'em too, you know. That's why I like she be proud of me, too. Like she went through some serious things in life, but she doing all right. That's good. But I had to get away from there, from Honolulu. And I no was working, and kind of hard for live there without money.

WN: You had brothers and sisters?

GG: Yes, I had brothers and sisters.

WN: Did they move with you?

GG: Oh no, just me.

WN: Oh, just you? How come just you?

GG: I was the oldest. They only had one child, was me. So I get all half-brothers and half-sisters.

WN: Oh, I see. So you're the only child from that marriage?

GG: Yeah, from that marriage, yeah.

WN: So was you, your mother and your grandmother.

GG: And my grandfather.

WN: Grandfather.

GG: Yeah. But mostly was with my grandparents. I could do anything I like, so. Like, I never had one father and stuff like that. Like when her boyfriends, you know, they like tell (laughs) me what for do I just tell 'em, "You not my father." But that's when you young, you get that kind attitude.

WN: What about your grandfather?

GG: My grandfather, he was kind of fair with me. He try bring me up the best he could.

WN: Did he work, too?

GG: Oh, no, they owned a pool hall.

WN: Oh, both of them.

GG: Yeah, used to run a pool hall. He used to work for the [Hawaiian] Pineapple [Company] in Lāna'i. Then he came to Honolulu, open up that business, pool hall.

WN: What was it like growing up Kopke Street? You said was kind of rough?

GG: Kind of rough but I had good friends, some good, some bad. But I had to get out of there. No could handle. (Chuckles) So I came to the Big Island live with my dad.

WN: Twenty-one years old, so about 1965. No, no, I'm sorry '75.

GG: Yeah, about there.

WN: So what made you—was that the only reason why you wanted to come to Big Island?

GG: Well, not only that. I was getting into trouble too, so just had to get away from that place. Maybe I try start one new life here, see how it is. I figured maybe I would stay couple years and then go back, but never did go back. Stayed here.

WN: So when you came here where did you live?

GG: I lived Kukuihaele with my dad. Stayed with him, then moved up to Āhualoa.

WN: How did your mother feel about you leaving Honolulu?

GG: She'd feel kind of bad but I told her I gotta do what I gotta do. Gotta try 'em out there, see if I can survive. So she had take it pretty good. So that, like I say, I no like ask her for too much stuffs, like money. Sometime I tell her, "Oh, I go look for job," but I no go look for job. I go movies or go pool hall.

WN: You had any jobs in Honolulu before you came?

GG: Yes, I used to work for *da kine*, International Steel Company, one steel company. I used to work with my uncles. But they used to give me a bad time, I no could take it. (WN chuckles.) And I no can talk back to them because that's my uncles. So I guess they try mold

me into one steel man, but I couldn't take it. So I came here. Then I worked for the state, state highway [system] for maybe about five years. They tell you, "Oh, hang in there. Maybe someday you going get permanent." But then met my wife [Lisa Juan Guerrero], had my first boy—my first kid was one boy—and couldn't make it on that kind of salary, you know, only five dollar something, \$5.19 one hour. So then I started to work for the plantation [Hāmākua Sugar Company].

WN: Nineteen eighty, yeah?

GG: Yeah.

WN: When did you get married.

GG: We not really married yet.

WN: I mean, well, when did you start being together?

GG: In 1979. Then I worked in the plantation.

WN: How did you get the job in the plantation?

GG: Just, one day I went to the main office and apply. Applied at the office. And then they gave me a chance. Because people tell, oh, was kind of hard for get in plantation.

WN: Oh yeah?

GG: Yeah, because I never had any family that was working in there.

WN: Oh, you needed—is that, what, lot of people get jobs like that?

GG: Yeah, like, this is close community, so they try take care of the generation that coming up. Like maybe the first immigrants that had come, they had start plantation. And they show good so when their kids come up so they take them. So they give me a chance, so I tried my best. And this was the longest I had stay at one job. So when I first had start I was a knapsack sprayer.

WN: Oh, just like John Mendes [another interviewee].

GG: Yeah.

WN: Knapsack sprayer. What did you have to do for that job?

GG: We had to walk the fields and spray herbicide on the weeds, and all kind stuff. But when rain we no can spray poison, we gotta go with pick, dig out the weeds. (Laughs)

WN: That's how they did 'em in the old days. (Chuckles)

GG: Yeah. Well, we used to walk, you gotta walk lines back and forth, spray. Was kind of bust-ass job because eight hours, you know, with one pump on your back.

WN: You had to refill 'em at all?

GG: Get somebody that refill you. When empty just go back to the truck, sit down on one stool and the guy he get one hose behind you then he fill 'em up. Tap you on the pump to let you know that it's full, keep on going. 'Cause you gotta start someplace. And that was the bottom. So after that I worked in sanitation, you know, like, go around the camps pick up rubbish.

WN: When you were knapsack sprayer, how much you got? You remember how much you made?

GG: That one was \$5.65 an hour. Then I went to the sanitation department, 'cause I was tired carry one pump. (Chuckles) Plus too, when I went to that job that was one lower grade, eh. So I figure I stay there until I get little bit seniority, then I apply all kind jobs. So after that we just go around the camps from here to Laupāhoe[hoē], go around the camps pick up rubbish, the trash and all. Sometime cut---maybe get done with picking up rubbish we go around cutting grass with the sickle. So whatever jobs I see posted on the bulletin board I just apply. Just keep on applying. I get plenty letters, "Oh, I'm sorry, you didn't get the job." Was getting little bit discouraged, but think to myself, I need one job. Plus too, I had my girl too, was just born too, so gotta make money someplace. Then not too bad. Afterward then I went to *lilikō* tractor operator with the harvesting department.

WN: What kind tractor operator?

GG: *Lilikō*.

WN: What's that?

GG: When the loader feed the cane trucks, he move, I rake all the 'ōpala on the ground. Rake 'em back to the piles.

WN: Oh, *lilikō*?

GG: Yes.

WN: So how did you learn to drive tractor?

GG: They had trainers train you for drive equipment. So that was shift [work], you know, you daytime, swing, and then you work graveyard. Every week you change shift. From there---that was a grade four but I needed little bit more money. So I worked in the factory [i.e., Haina sugar mill] as a factory relief worker. Just like one utility worker.

WN: That was raise in pay?

GG: Yeah, that was a grade five.

WN: Grade five.

GG: Yeah. Used to run equipment, push bagasse for the conveyer to the---feed 'em to the furnace. And see, if get any kind of jam, I have to be the first one there, jump in, dig some cane.

WN: This was a higher grade than being a tractor operator?

GG: Yeah, the tractor operator was only grade four.

WN: Because seems like tractor operator, seems like a skilled job. This one is . . .

GG: Yeah, because more skilled job in there, eh. You all kinds just like the utility. Like if this operator don't come, I take his place. But I get his pay after that.

So then after that I went to this other job, was in the mill yard, stacker operator. That's feed the cane to the cleaning plant, the washer. I used to watch that guy on the washing tower, I watch him. Was thinking, oh, maybe one day I can get that job. So I was there maybe couple years, stacker operator. Pile cane in the mill yard. And then when the trucks go out in the field, they don't come back, then I feed the cane through the washer. So then after that I *bin* get that cleaning plant job. That was a grade six. I moved up to grade six.

WN: What do you call that again?

GG: Cleaning plant operator.

WN: Cleaning plant operator.

GG: So I *wen* get that job pretty wired. You feed the cane through the washer, then it goes to the shredder. And then they can tell by how much tonnage you make, eh, how much cane you can put in there. So I used to watch all this other old-timer, they show you the basic on the switch board and everything, get levers, but they no tell you everything, eh. (WN chuckles.) But I watch them, how they make—how they do 'em. So after a while I get the hang of it. So used to make some tonnage, but, our shift. You know the truck drivers, they all used to like me be their shift all the time, because I no make them wait on the feeder table. Soon as they come, I like they go back out bring me the cane, eh. Like the other two operators, they take their time, and got trucks they all line up. But was good that job.

Me, I thought plantation was going last forever. But the way I---you know, I read the [news]paper and everything. They buy sugar from this other foreign country. But the plantation, too, over here, we was the highest paid employees for sugar, eh. So I guess that's why. . . . And the prices was always dropping. And we never get raise for six years, you know.

WN: What about like, were there people getting laid off even before that and bumping other people off the jobs?

GG: Yes, (tape inaudible) so I got bumped from the cleaning plant. So I had to go back to the utility man until they had moved to someplace, then I *bin* get that job back again. Because I get experience, eh.

WN: Oh, I see, so you did get bumped from that . . .

GG: Yeah.



WN: I guess that's a good job, eh.

GG: Oh, yes. Because I look, whoever the old-timers, I see when they get that job, that's it. They just stay right there until they retire. Because I grade six so that was \$8.76 an hour. So that was just like big money already. But I was paying rent outside, you know, was \$600 a month.

WN: Where were you living when you were working plantation?

GG: I was living in, well, here and there in Honoka'a. Once they raise the rent I gotta go find one little bit cheaper house. Until they raise the rent then I keep on trying.

WN: So you were living in, like, this kind area or . . .

GG: No, no, regular, up the subdivision up Honoka'a town, up there.

WN: They didn't have this kind housing over here?

GG: Oh, they had but I never had seniority, eh.

WN: Oh, I see.

GG: You know, like if you only work about five years, six years, that's kind of hard yet. You cannot get one house yet. Maybe if you work ten years, then you get chance. So took me about twelve years before I could get one house. But you see, they post [available] houses, when I apply they always give me one house—like, I like around here [Haina]—they always give me [offer] house in Pāpa'aloa, Laupāhoe[hoe], and I no apply for that houses over there. So I used to file grievance and everything. Why is this? Why they no give me the house I had applied for instead of give me—just like maybe just for shut me out—they give me over there, "Oh here, that's one house for you." But like too, my third child is little bit handicap. He don't talk and he's eight years old right now. He don't talk yet, so he go special ed[ucation]. And in Laupāhoe[hoe School], never did have that kind [special education] program yet. And he used to go up to Waimea. So from Waimea they ain't going all the way to Laupāhoe[hoe] just for pick up one kid and bring 'em school up to Waimea. So I talked to the [Hāmākua Sugar Co.] owner's son, David Morgan, I told him my situation and whatnot. So just so happen had this house open, and had one other one down side. So they told me, there, I get this house. So ho, I happy. Right here. Three bedroom and close to the mill, everything.

WN: What happened to the family that was living here?

GG: Well, had this *Haole* guy, he move back to the Mainland. Only him and his girlfriend. Only them two in one big house, you know. So was lucky for me that he . . .

WN: Was worker or. . .

GG: Yeah, he was working instrumentation. So I guess he no was making enough money so he went back to the Mainland. So this house *wen* open up and I had applied and I *wen* get 'em.

WN: This is two years ago?

- GG: Yeah, two years ago. Just before the first time the plantation *wen* shut down [1993]. Before we went back for the final harvest [1994]. So was kind of good for me because if was shut down and I *wen* only collect [unemployment], going be kind of hard, eh, I go rent someplace [else]. So just in time I *bin* get 'em, because then when I *wen* move here the rent was only \$52 [a month], compared to \$600. (Chuckles)
- WN: Cannot beat that.
- GG: Yeah, really. The house is pretty old, but it's one roof over my head, eh. So they *wen* call me back for the final harvest. Went back there.
- WN: How did you first hear about the plantation closing down?
- GG: Through the newspaper. We used to have fliers from the [Hāmākua] Sugar Company saying we not doing too good, this and that going happen, so I was thinking, oh wow, all these years I stay here and then now, all of a sudden this happen. But you gotta go with the flow, eh. But the one I feel pity for is *da kine* guys maybe they had only two, three years more for work and then they retire. Like me, I young yet, so I can still maybe go school or take some kind of trade, eh. So was all right.
- WN: So you found out, you sort of had an idea that the plantation was gonna close.
- GG: Yeah.
- WN: And how you thought about that at that time?
- GG: Oh, was kind of sad, you know. I thought maybe I could just stay here and retire from this job. Didn't have to go anyplace else look for job, but. But I think I just stick with it until it's done.
- WN: Were you worried that you would have hard time supporting your family?
- GG: Oh yeah. That had crossed my mind. That's why I lucky, too, my *wahine*, she work. She *stay* working now at Herb's Place in [Honoka'a] town, one waitress. So that kind of helped little bit. But then too, I was telling my boy, too, my oldest one, as much as possible, that sugar ain't gonna last too long. He gotta do something, with his life. I would support him going to school. After he graduate from high school, I going try my best for help him go to college and whatnot. Or else, I tell him, "If you like join the [military] service, they going save money for you for go school after that." So that's what he's—he *stay* thinking about that. But I try not to push him.
- WN: So normally if still had sugar you think he would have eventually gone . . .
- GG: I would try not to let him get into the sugar plantation.
- WN: Oh, yeah? How come?
- GG: Aah, I like him be better than me. More better life for him. 'Cause he get one good head on his shoulder. He can do better than what I *stay* doing now. That's why now---plus too, when

we went back to the final harvest—I *wen* stay until the final harvest—then they *bin* call me back again for take the mill apart [i.e., dismantle the Haina sugar mill], 'cause they *bin* send 'em [the parts] to the Philippines. So they had this Malaysian company come over for help tear 'em down, and they *bin* call us because I knew the mill and everything, because when off-season I used to work in the mill, operate the twenty-ton crane. So I went back there. But I feel kind of sad because where I used to work, everything, we *stay* taking 'em apart and everything. Now all skeleton. Yeah, it brings back memories, you know.

WN: How long did you work for dismantling the . . .

GG: Was about for six months.

WN: Six months.

GG: Yeah, the contract was for six months.

WN: So dismantling all the machinery.

GG: Yeah, the mill, the cleaning plant.

WN: The building itself, too?

GG: No, no. I didn't do. . . . Just the rollers, the turbines, stuff like that. Aah but, means come sad, you know, I look at that. But then now too, I look some of my friends that I was working with, still feel sad for them because from the final harvest, they still not working. I look and that's about couple years already. But I went to this unemployment schools, and whatnot. They *wen* send me computer school and they had classes, you know, how for make your resumè, one application, your appearance, how you talk to the employer for get one job, and whatnot. But the thing that I never like, too, was working for the hotels. I was used to, like, operating equipment, stuff like that. And I couldn't talk good in front of people. You know, like hotel, you gotta talk to the tourist. And my English no was that good. So every time this unemployment—we get one office in Honoka'a—always, they always tell me, "You gotta try." I tell myself, yeah, yeah, I go try, I go try. But aah, I no go. I just look for other kind job. But hard, you gotta go all the way Hilo or maybe gotta go all the way Kona. Yet, only so much jobs for equipment operator. They not going give you the equipment operator right away. You gotta go start [manual] labor, you know, like how I *wen* go start plantation poison pump [i.e., knapsack sprayer], like that.

So one friend *wen* suggest that I go try working for security. So I was thinking, security [guard], yeah, probably I can do that because I was in the army reserve before. So we used to pull guard duty. I went training for that kind of stuff. So I went to Hawai'i Protective Association [Ltd.]. But I never know was with the hotel.

(Laughter)

GG: They was contract out to Mauna Kea Beach Hotel. So I went, I figure I gotta try something. But what they do is, you have to man the entry gates to the hotels. But they teach me how for talk good little bit, because I had to talk to so much people.

WN: Who taught you? The Mauna Kea [Beach Hotel]?

GG: No, they never teach me. I had to watch the guys who was training me. I watch how they talk, what they can say, what you no can say, how they act to the tourist. Them is just like customers; they always right. You always gotta smile at them. So, so far so good, I'm still there.

WN: How long you been there?

GG: From January [1996]. So it's gonna be almost a year. Yeah. So I'm still there but I'm still looking for other jobs yet. Security is---I don't want to retire from that kind of job. Maybe for a part-time job, yeah. So I *stay* waiting for this—they trying to get this End Search going over here. They grow lumber, they grow trees and stuff like that, and they like—where the place they *wen* bust the mill, they like put one factory for burn electricity, make electricity and whatnot. But that is not until four or five years from now. It's only in the planning stages.

WN: What company is this?

GG: End Search.

WN: End Search.

GG: Yeah. It's a Mainland company. So they trying to get all the permit and stuff from the state and whatnot.

WN: Is this to grow the eucalyptus?

GG: Yeah, it's the eucalyptus tree, yeah.

WN: So you think that you might want to go into that kind of . . .

GG: Yeah, I wouldn't mind, you know, that's forestry. I worked the fields around here, so I wouldn't mind getting back into that.

WN: You know, when you were going to the training and stuff, computer, like that, who was sponsoring all that?

GG: The state.

WN: The state.

GG: Yeah, they had grant.

(Tape inaudible.)

WN: You went to them for help or they came to you?

GG: No, I went to this unemployment office in Honoka'a. They had set up everything because

they said they was going give classes for basic computer skills. So figure, aah, nowadays is all computer so if I can get a head start in that it's going be better for me.

WN: So you took that course?

GG: Yeah. Me and my *wahine* went.

WN: How was it?

GG: Complicated because the beginning part, me, I no type. Hoo, the fingers come all sore (WN chuckles) and everything, but. Two times I went to that class. So I get pretty much the hang of it, but after the class *pau*, I no more computer at home so. . . . You know what I mean, if I had one at home, then. . . .

WN: Practice.

GG: Yeah. Like now, well, I can type little bit, they *wen* teach me for type and whatnot. Teach me how for spell, too. So was good.

WN: So had shutdown, they called you back for final harvest.

GG: Yeah, the final . . .

WN: You didn't have another job at that time?

GG: No, no, I was on furlough at that time.

WN: Were you on any kind of benefits?

GG: Yeah, unemployment.

WN: Okay. So they called you back for final harvest.

GG: Yeah, that was . . .

WN: How you felt on that day, the last day [September 30, 1994]?

GG: The last day? Very sad. (Chuckles) Because the last day everybody went up to the main town, Honoka'a town, and the last load they brought in [from the fields], they went through town and everything. I look at all the old-timers, the retirees, that was their life, before. See them, you know, they get tears in their eye and everything. Was kind of sad. Sugar wasn't gonna last too long, so. But then they lucky, too, because they had retire already, you know, they did their time. Like the one I said, maybe the one had maybe four, five years left, then, they not going back school because some, they no can read. You know, so it's kind of hard for them. And like the other one, like I said, my friend, I see they more young than me. I don't know what's with them. I guess they used to already, not working. I guess they rather have the welfare, eh. (Chuckles)

WN: What about you, you rather work?

GG: Yeah, I rather work. 'Cause when I was brought up, the man is the one bring home the bacon. Like when I no was working, even though I was collecting [unemployment], just like I no was the man, you know. I not---you the one provide for your family. Like, collecting [unemployment], somebody *stay* giving you the money. I mean, I *bin* go out look for jobs and whatnot, but, "Don't call us, we'll call you." Or I call them up they tell, "Oh, I'm sorry." I was getting kind of discouraged already. Was thinking, oh, never gonna find me a job. Until this security [guard job]. Not bad.

WN: So the security you started January of '96, so this is after you helped dismantle the mill.

GG: Yeah. 'Cause I *wen* collect for about almost one year before—because . . .

WN: Unemployment?

GG: Yeah.

WN: So when you first---sugar plantation closed down, so the state helped?

GG: Yeah, they had all kind grants for, like, to go to UH in Hilo [University of Hawai'i-Hilo], the [Hawai'i] Community College, building maintenance, landscaping, but [while] when had that building maintenance and the landscaping [classes], I went back work for the final harvest. So by the time we *wen* get through with the final harvest, the classes was all maybe towards the end or it was halfway, so I no could get into those kind of classes.

WN: So you made a decision, you said you wanted to go help with the final harvest.

GG: Yeah.

WN: How come, you just wanted to do that kind work?

GG: Yeah, well, all that time, all that years I doing that kind of job. So I figure I go help the company out for the last time. (Chuckles) The last hurrah, eh.

WN: You think the company---was the company good to you?

GG: Oh yeah. They *wen* take care me, you know. They gave me a chance for work for the company. So that's the least I could do, you know. Even though all these other guys. . . . And plus too, they told us, if we no go back for the final harvest, we would have to move out of the plantation house. So, like, they had us in one—in their grip. Either you come back or you lose the house. So . . .

WN: This house?

GG: Yeah, the plantation house. So a lot of people they went back for the final harvest because of the house. They never like go back out, pay \$600 a month, you know. But even if [that were not the case], I would still go back. Go back to that final harvest.

WN: So seems like you make a good move then.

GG: Yeah.

WN: I mean, you know, the decision you made was good.

GG: Had to think about my family or where we going live. (Chuckles)

WN: And in the meantime, through all of this, your wife was still working?

GG: Yeah, she was working. That's why good, her, she get tips, like that. You know, that kind put food on the table, pay some bills. So that had worked out little bit all right. So not bad.

WN: And this security [guard] job you have, is that like better pay?

GG: Yeah, well, little bit better than the plantation, because the plantation I was only getting \$8.76 but at the security I getting \$9.50 [an hour]. So it's all right. Yeah.

WN: How's the commute when driving over there?

GG: Oh, well I get some friends from the plantation, we work same shift so we carpool every week, so easy on the gas, on the maintenance on the car, eh.

WN: So you commute every day?

GG: Yeah, every day.

WN: How long does it take you to get over there?

GG: Ah, maybe about forty minutes.

WN: That's not bad.

GG: Yeah, it's not too bad, yeah. But like me, I get the night shift, so no more traffic on the road or anything. And all the tourists all sleeping, so. (Chuckles) Oh, and then just gotta watch whoever come on the hotel property. You gotta screen the motorists, whoever come in, check 'em out. If they no belong there they no can come in. So, it's a good job.

WN: I was wondering, when you were working plantation, the work place is right over here, and then your family's over here. You can just go over there, walk, (GG chuckles) work and come back. Can spend more time at home and . . .

GG: Right, right.

WN: How does that affect you now? You spend less time at home, right, now?

GG: Well, not too bad because my two oldest ones, they understand, just that my young one.

WN: How old is your young one?

GG: He's eight, he's going be eight years old. And my oldest one is sixteen.

WN: That's a girl?

GG: The boy.

WN: Oh, boy. And then you have the girl that's fourteen.

GG: Yeah, then my boy, the youngest one. The two oldest one, they understand. They old enough for understand what I gotta do. But just my youngest one, he don't know. And sometime hard. Me and my wife we go work—sometime she go work in the morning, and that's when I come home, so I go sleep. And then she come home, I get up, I go work. (Chuckles) But aah, that's just life.

WN: You folks cannot do too much stuff together, then.

GG: Oh, well every chance we get when my week—now I *stay* getting my weekends off. Before I used to have 'em [days off] Monday-Tuesday, Wednesday-Thursday. Kind of hard because the kids in school and whatnot. So now I get little bit seniority, the security, then I can change. Now I get the Friday-Saturday [off]. So that's good too. They no more school, so we go to the beach, we go to Hilo, Kona. Sometime we go around the island.

WN: What time you start every night?

GG: Eleven o'clock.

WN: Eleven P.M.?

GG: Yeah, but I leave [home] about ten o'clock. And I *pau* work at seven [A.M.], I get home about almost eight o'clock. And they off to school already.

WN: At least you can spend time in the evenings, eh?

GG: Evening, yeah.

(Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

GG: So it's good, yeah. They understand. Main thing they understand.

WN: And how long you sleep in the daytime?

GG: Maybe from ten o'clock until they come home, about 2:30.

WN: The thing about night shift, yeah, you always get less sleep.

GG: Yeah.

(Laughter)

WN: I remember that.



GG: But not bad the [Mauna Kea Beach] Hotel, they dress you, they feed you.

WN: Oh.

GG: Yeah, so it's not too bad. I no spend money . . .

WN: Oh, you no need to pay for meals?

GG: No.

WN: Oh.

GG: So, they give me uniform. Not like if I was working plantation, you gotta bring your own food, and whatnot. So that much more I kind of save.

WN: Okay. So since the plantation close, what do you think is the most difficult thing you had to deal with?

GG: Adjusting to different kind of job from what I was doing. Like I say, I never really care for work at the hotel. I'm not a people person.

WN: You like the physical kind of work.

GG: Yeah, outdoors, out in the open, operating equipment.

END OF SIDE ONE

## SIDE TWO

WN: Okay. You know, since the plantation closed, too, people say things like, well, get lot of people out of work, and kids don't have something to do in terms of work when they get out of school. Is there---you feel there's more crime and things going on in the community now?

GG: Yeah, because they don't have any jobs. All they do is stay at home, maybe smoke marijuana or something, get into trouble. And a lot of them, they don't drive, so for find job maybe Hilo, Kona, they no more transportation. Kind of hard for depend on somebody for always bring you [to] work and whatnot. That's why I like my kids, if they go Mainland, well, better opportunity for them. That's fine, you know. Make something of themselves. That's why, even like my girl, too, she like be one schoolteacher. I tell, yeah, that's a good job, too. I would try my best for help them for go college for do whatever they want to do. Just that my youngest one, that's the one going get the hardest time, handicap, eh. But we talked to doctors and everything. They tell when he get older, come one adult like that, that he would be able for get one job, take care himself. But for now, we gotta take care him. But then I look some other kids, they same age as my boy, I look them stay out late in town and everything. Plus too, no more too much programs for that kind kids around here for keep 'em out of trouble. That's the bad thing about that. I mean, we get one gym but they only open certain hours. You know, like, they get one place where they can just talk, I guess, find out

what they need and whatnot. No more that kind program over here. That's why I try make my kids and my nephews, like that, try stay clear of that kind boys, and no get influenced by them. So I look my boy, stuff like that, he going in the right direction. But never can tell when they get little bit older.

WN: You look at your own life, you had some hard times when you was growing up. And you see some kids maybe going through the same kind of thing. What goes through your mind when you see that?

GG: Well, I would like to try and help. I help the kids around here, the community, because I was coaching basketball, P and R [department of parks and recreation] for about seven, eight years. So I try keep 'em in the gym. And as the years go by, I see them, they grow up, I look, oh, all right, they *stay* coming good citizens like that. I feel proud of what I had try help them. Like maybe the father or. . . . Because I see, you know when we get games like that, maybe I only see the mother. I no see the fathers. Maybe I was father figure to them. So I feel kind of good. I try help them, keep 'em off the street, you know, off drugs. And then the older they get, they still remember me.

WN: Good, yeah?

GG: Feel kind of good, yeah. (WN chuckles.) So I try help them out. But now, I *stay* coaching girls from fourth grade to sixth grade. 'Cause boys, aah, I win with boys. That's why I like try see if I can win with girls. Still getting hard time yet.

(Laughter)

GG: But good to see them grow up, be good person, people like that. I used to coach my boy, my oldest one, until I no could coach him already. So I go coach somebody else's kids. 'Cause I look, no more volunteers. They no like volunteer. Somebody gotta do 'em, so I figure I go try. My *wahine*, she get mad with me sometimes, "Yeah, you tell you not going coach already but look, come the next year you *stay* coaching again."

"Yeah, but that's for the kids. *Bumbai* when this one *pau*, I *pau* already."

(Laughter)

GG: When they pass the age group that I *stay* in, usually the nine and ten, eleven and twelve, after that, thirteen, fourteen, they almost ready for go high school and play. And then sometimes I ask the other fathers, "Eh *brah*, coach 'em, go coach. Get with the program."

"Aah, no more time. No more time."

Me, I no more time. Even me, I never have time. Every time I gotta swap shift with my partner so I make the time. And they tell me, aw, they no more time. I think to myself, eh, *brah*, you gotta find way for make time. I know the job important, but you gotta think about—me, I think about the community, the kids and whatnot. But the ones I had coached, I look, them all had come good. Not like the other ones that—they come to the gym they only watch, go behind smoke cigarette, you know. Me, I only can take so much boys, you know what I mean? Sometime I go over the limit. I try take all, I no can take all. And only me,

now. Only me *stay* coaching maybe sixteen boys. (Laughs) But me and Leroy [Alip], we was coaches together. You know, when our boys, his oldest one and my oldest one together. But now getting kind of tired of that. I go try but you can only try so much. Then I used to coach *da kine*, too, Pop Warner football, the pee wees, the small—the young ones. That's why now, I look at them they *stay* playing for the school. Oh, I *stay* thinking, oh, I *stay* getting old already.

(Laughter)

GG: But they still remember me and I feel good too. From far away, "Hey coach!" you know. All right. That's why.

WN: That's good.

GG: Yeah.

WN: So this community not going have sugar, no more sugar now. What do you like to see? I know you said good to see the lumber trees come in. Anything else you'd like to see for this community for the next generation?

GG: Well, before we *wen* shut down, they said they was going build one hotel over here, above Waipi'o. Would be good, if they *wen* build one hotel over there. I wouldn't mind working. Closer too, eh. Then I wouldn't mind working for the hotel. But now, for the younger ones coming up, if they no get one good education or they no set their mind on what they going do, they going be wasted here. No more opportunities, only get so much jobs. You can only take so much for pump gas. Take so much for the market over here for stock boy or whatever. But for one career, they gotta go someplace else. Even if you move to Kona or Hilo they still getting hard time. Because in Hilo and Kona they all coming down Mauna Kea [Beach Hotel] for work. Like, now, look Ka'u sugar [i.e., Ka'u Agribusiness Company displaced workers] from there they come all the way to Mauna Kea [Beach Hotel]. And that's about one hundred miles, that. Almost three-hours drive just for come work for ten dollars one hour. (Chuckles) That's why not too much opportunities over here. That's how come like now, I look plenty people [from] Honoka'a like I used to see before, they not here no more.

WN: Oh, they moved?

GG: Yeah, I guess they move to the Mainland or maybe they figure they go Honolulu or Maui. But you go Maui and Honolulu, the cost of living over there is kind of high, too.

WN: Cannot get fifty-two-dollars-a-month house.

(Laughter)

GG: Oh yeah. And in a way too, lucky the plantation *wen* shut down. Because we bought the land on the house.

WN: Oh, same time?

GG: No, no. It was maybe last year. They sold us the house and the land for \$1100.

WN: Eleven hundred dollars?

GG: Yeah. (Chuckles) Eleven hundred dollars.

WN: Last year?

GG: Yeah, last year.

WN: Oh, man.

GG: Now they [have] grants for fix up the house so that's not too bad. The only way you going pay back the grant if you sell the house. Then you have to pay back the grant.

WN: So you own it now.

GG: Yes, I just *wen* get the deed not too long ago. Yeah, so not too bad.

WN: That's good, I mean that means there's a lot of hope, you know what I mean?

GG: Yeah, really.

WN: You own it, it's not like you gotta go out and . . .

GG: Right, you gotta—for keep 'em you gotta find a job and whatnot. That's why was all right.

WN: I know you said that people moved to the Mainland or something, but would you rather—if you had your way, would you want them [GG's children] to stay here?

GG: I would like them to stay here, you know. Everybody would like their family stay one place, but unless maybe in the years to come, maybe something—going come out good around here, you know. Or maybe down Kawaihae, that's not too far. Even in Hilo, I no mind. If they living Hilo, that's okay. That's not too far. But I always stress to them, "You guys gotta be better than your parents. Do something with your life. I cannot be supporting you until you get old." You can only tell them so much. That's up to them after that. But if something around come up good around here, would be perfect for them. That's why. That's about it. (Chuckles)

WN: Okay.

GG: Right on.

WN: Thank you.

GG: Okay, *brah*.

END OF INTERVIEW

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**Volume I**

**Center for Oral History  
Social Science Research Institute  
University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa**

**August 1997**